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*Korea: South Korean sources are highly critical of the way the Pueblo situation is being handled.

Seoul radio reports that Premier Chong Il-kwon today registered a strong complaint with the US Ambassador and the UN commander over what he termed US "appeasement" in Panmunjom and exclusion of South Korea from the talks.

An aide of Kim Chong-pil, chairman of the ruling Democratic Republican Party, has told the US Embassy that Kim is concerned about mounting public and party resentment over what he believes to be the US failure to consult South Korean officials on how to handle the Pueblo case.

The press and some other politicians have been equally critical. The criticism has ranged from casting doubt on US policies to urging the South Korean Government to undertake independent retaliatory action against North Korea. Fifty students from Seoul's Chungang University staged a 20-minute anti-American demonstration today in front of the US Embassy.

The North Korean radio, meanwhile, has broadcast the recorded text of still another "confession"--the fifth from a Pueblo crewman [redacted]

[redacted] His alleged statement is consistent with the pattern of earlier "confessions" broadcast by Pyongyang radio in expressing guilt over intrusion into North Korean waters and apologizing for such action.

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Arab States - Israel: Jordan is threatening to seek new UN action to secure an Arab-Israeli settlement.

For several weeks, Arab frustrations have been growing because UN emissary Jarring has circulated from capital to capital, merely listening. Israel, meanwhile, is becoming more firmly entrenched in the occupied areas.

Jordanian Prime Minister Talhuni, worried about recent Israeli actions around Jerusalem, now says he may go to the UN Security Council unless the Jarring mission shows signs of producing results. Cairo and Beirut have expressed similar dissatisfaction with Jarring's messenger role. A Jordanian initiative at the UN could well destroy Jarring's chances of working out a settlement.

Although Arab leaders are increasingly pessimistic, they may see in the Jarring mission a face-saving device which would force them to make concessions they find themselves politically unable to offer on their own initiative. The Arabs are obviously hoping that the US will exert pressure on the Israelis to cooperate in the peace effort.

Panama: The presidential campaign could easily degenerate into violence.

Charges and countercharges by government candidate Samudio and front-running National Union candidate Arias are becoming more vicious. Both sides are organizing strong-arm bands for use during the campaign and at the polls on 12 May.

A dispute over alleged irregularities in issuing voter identification cards could cause President Robles to replace one or both of the electoral tribunal judges and give Samudio control of this key body. This, in turn, could alter the composition of provincial and district election boards, now heavily weighted in favor of Arias.

Wholesale firings and cabinet changes have assured the Samudio forces of control over the government machinery. In addition, National Guard Commandant Vallarino is under pressure to assist the Samudio ticket in the election. He has thus far remained neutral in the race, but both sides are courting his support.

If Samudio succeeds in dominating the election machinery and gaining Vallarino's support, the likelihood of disorders by the backers of the popular Arias would be greatly increased.

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NOTES

USSR- US: Soviet officials have hinted that Moscow may be preparing to accept the US offer a year ago to hold bilateral talks on strategic arms control. Ambassador Dobrynin, who has been in Moscow on consultations, told Ambassador Thompson that he thought the Soviet Government would give a favorable reply on ABM talks if the Korean affair were settled. An official of the Soviet Embassy in Washington said late in January he was sure that Moscow would soon agree at least to "preliminary" strategic arms talks.

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Syria: An upheaval within the radical Baathist regime may be in the offing. Political infighting apparently has reached a new peak. Several army officer supporters of the chief of staff reportedly have been dismissed, and at least two cabinet ministers are alleged to have resigned. The trial of an extremist Baathist labor leader may be the catalyst leading to a showdown. Any group likely to come to power at this time would not, however, temper Syria's extremist policies.

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Sudan: An effort by moderate opposition forces led by Sadiq al-Mahdi to bring down the present parliamentary government may lead to violence in Khartoum. Sadiq's uncle, who favors the government, has been assembling his tribal backers south of Khartoum, while Sadiq is gathering his own followers across the river from the city. The government will probably try to avert a clash but is likely to support the uncle's forces in any demonstrations that occur.

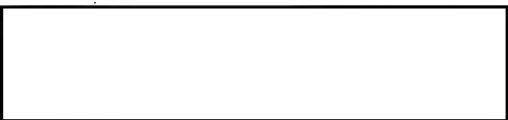
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